

- MARCH 2008 -

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION  
OF THE CALIFORNIA VICTIM  
COMPENSATION PROGRAM

# Victim Compensation CONNECTION

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## *In this issue...*

New Poster Released  
...page 2

Victims' Rights Week  
...page 3

Provider Outreach  
...page 4

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C A L I F O R N I A  
**V C G C B**  
Victim Compensation & Government Claims Board  
Helping California Crime Victims Since 1965

**Karen McGagin**  
Executive Officer



## Justice for Victims Benefits All

FROM THE DESK OF KAREN MCGAGIN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**National Crime Victims' Rights Week** April 13-19, 2008  
**Justice for VICTIMS. Justice for ALL.**

In recent years there has been great progress in ensuring the rights of victims. Imagine what it must have been like before victims' rights were recognized. What if a loved one was murdered, and though a suspect was arrested, the victim's family received little or no information about the arraignment, continuances or other critical events in the case. The victim's family was not allowed to deliver an impact statement at the sentencing nor notified that the convicted killer was up for release on parole. Until the past few decades, victims of crime and their families endured such disappointments and injustices.

To date, 33 states have amended their constitutions to protect these rights. California was the first state to establish a victim compensation program in 1965. Since that time, the program has provided more than \$1.7 billion to help victims of crime.

Despite these advances, there is much more that we can do to serve victims of crime. Every victim's experience is

unique, but most express the same priorities. They want to be safe and made whole, their physical and emotional wounds healed, offenders held accountable, and to take part in the criminal justice process. They want their communities to stand behind them as they strive to rebuild their lives.

As a community, we can take steps to respond to the needs of victims. First, we can acknowledge that crime affects everyone. Second, we can recognize that victims' rights promote justice – both for victims and for the community. Finally, we can serve victims more effectively by helping them to understand their rights, negotiate the criminal justice system, and in accessing needed services.

Seeking justice for victims serves our nation's highest ideals. As we honor victims at ceremonies this National Crime Victims' Rights Week, let us commit ourselves to serving them better every week of the year. By investing in *justice for victims*, we move closer to achieving *justice for all*.

## New Poster Looks to Raise Awareness of Program



A simple message – “Crime Hurts Everybody. We Can Help.” – is the theme of the new Victim Compensation Program (VCP) poster.

The poster joins the new DVD “Helping Victims Every Day” in an ongoing multimedia awareness campaign dedicated to reaching every Californian who may be eligible for assistance from the VCP.

Destined for display in victim-witness centers, law enforcement offices, hospital emergency rooms, crisis centers and many other locations serving crime victims, the poster can be ordered by filling out and faxing the Materials Request Form located in the “Publications Section” of the VCP website, [www.victimcompensation.ca.gov](http://www.victimcompensation.ca.gov).

A Spanish-language version of the poster is coming soon. The poster and other VCP informational materials are free of charge.

## New Look, New Feel, More Features Fill Board's Redesigned Website

Special National Crime Victims' Rights week content is just one highlight of the VCGCB's updated website. The site has been redesigned from top to bottom and we've added resources to make it more helpful for users.

### EXPANDED RESOURCES

- An “Information for Victim Advocates” page provides advocates with helpful resources. These include an e-mail link to the Board's victim advocate liaison, access to the “Desk Manual for Victim Advocates,” and a victim compensation “Application Status Request Form” to request information on behalf of victims who have applied to the program.
- Victim service providers have an expanded section tailored to their business needs, with information on billing, benefits and more.
- Crime victims from any California county can more quickly find contact information for their local Victim Witness Assistance Center, including direct e-mail or website links to local offices, if available.
- We've posted a Victims' Rights page with information for crime victims and links to additional resources.
- “Helping Victims Every Day,” our new video, is streaming into the site.

### USER-FRIENDLY DESIGN

- Tab-style navigation along the top of every page helps users can find links to every key section and page in the site within a few mouse clicks.
- Users can type in keywords to instantly perform a Google-powered search of the Board's website or every State of California website.
- The site meets leading standards for accessibility by general users and people with disabilities, such as the vision-impaired who use page-readers to browse the Internet.



VISIT

[WWW.VICTIMCOMPENSATION.CA.GOV](http://WWW.VICTIMCOMPENSATION.CA.GOV)

*"Justice for Victims. Justice for All."*

# Crime Victims' Rights Week 2008

## Missing Persons

### Information, Resources & Hope

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is proud to be a co-sponsor of the upcoming "Missing Persons: Information, Resources and Hope" conference. Advocates and representatives will be participating in this important event held during the upcoming Victims' Rights Week.

The conference is sponsored by the Governor's Office, Crime Victim Advocate; the Governor's Office of Emergency Services; the Attorney General's (AG's) Office of Victim Services and the AG's Missing Persons and Unidentified Persons Unit; the VCGCB; and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services.

The conference take place Thursday, April 17, in the Lecture Hall at McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento. Registration is free for the all-day conference dedicated to publicizing resources that can help prevent and resolve missing-person cases.

A \$10 box lunch is available. A registration form and payment for lunch must be submitted by April 8. For more information, contact:

California Department of Justice  
Conference Services Unit  
P.O. Box 944255  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550  
(916) 445-6557 FAX: (916) 324-5033

## Plan to Attend!

Crime victims and their friends, family members, advocates and allies are preparing for the annual national awareness event, Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 13-19, 2008.

### VICTIMS' MARCH ON THE CAPITOL

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VC-GCB) and other victim service providers will show their support with crime victims at the Victims' March on the Capitol. This 19th annual event will be held midday on April 16 on the west steps of the State Capitol.



*Family members display photos of crime victims at last year's Victims' March on the Capitol.*

The march and rally are highlighted by the moving testimonials of crime victims and survivors. The event is a chance for victims' rights to take center stage, in front of a diverse audience. Everyone, from the youngest child who has lost a parent, brother or sister to crime, to the state's most powerful leaders, shares the message of victims' rights.

### LOCAL EVENTS, VIGILS AND CEREMONIES

Community focused organizations throughout California will be marking Victims' Rights Week with local events.

The VCGCB has published a calendar of these special events along with other resources at [www.victimcompensation.ca.gov](http://www.victimcompensation.ca.gov). A Victims' Rights' Week flier is available to download and print. Links to additional materials from the federal Office for Victims of Crime are also provided.

Additionally, the VCGCB is distributing thousands of victim awareness ribbons and other materials to organizations in every California county to help them raise awareness of victims' rights. Specially prepared with this year's colors, the Victims' Rights Week theme – "Justice for Victims. Justice for All." – printed in blue text on the green ribbon.



## Upcoming Events

**APRIL 24, 2008**

### **SACRAMENTO CONVENTION CENTER**

“Working With Law Enforcement and Working With Victims’ Families” is just one of the breakout sessions planned for the DNA/Cold Case Summit on April 24. Other sessions include “Developing a Cold Case Unit – Lessons Learned” and “Legal Challenges for Investigators and Prosecutors.”

The summit will also feature expert speakers and a showcase of the newest strategies and latest technologies for investigating and prosecuting cold cases.

Among those expected to attend and participate in the summit are state and local government representatives, crime laboratory directors, criminalists, victims’ rights organization representatives, victim advocates, members of law enforcement, homicide/cold case detectives and district attorneys.

## DNA/COLD CASE SUMMIT

The DNA/Cold Case Summit hosts include:

- California District Attorneys Association
- California Police Chiefs Association
- California Association of Crime Laboratory Directors
- California State Sheriffs Association
- Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board
- Citizens Against Homicide
- Institute for the Advancement of Criminal Justice
- California Crime Victim Assistance Association

For information on registration, sponsorship or exhibitor opportunities, please contact:

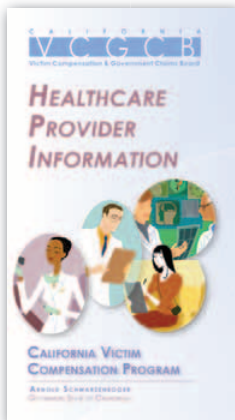
California District Attorneys Association  
(Reference DNA/Cold Case Summit)

Attention: Suzanne Hunter

921 11th Street, 3rd Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: (916) 443-2017 Fax: (916) 443-2886



### Provider Publication Highlights Ongoing Awareness Effort

Licensed mental health, medical and dental healthcare providers deliver vital services to victims of violent crime. The VCGCB is working in a variety of ways to build productive relationships with these service providers, and to raise awareness within the professional communities about

the Victim Compensation Program (VCP) and the benefits of working with crime victims.

A new full-color “Healthcare Provider Information” pamphlet that provides helpful details on billing, required forms, reimbursement rates and the range of benefits available to crime victims is now available.

An online version of the publication for viewing or printing is available in the “Service Providers” section of the VCGCB website, [www.victimcompensation.ca.gov](http://www.victimcompensation.ca.gov). To order hard-copy pamphlets, fill out and fax the Materials Request Form located in the “Publications” section of the website.

VCGCB staff are also meeting directly with mental health professionals interested in finding out more about the VCP. These Provider Information Forums are being held throughout California.

Upon request, representatives will travel to meet with groups of mental health providers and explain the program, resolve issues and answer questions.

To request a Provider Information Forum, please contact Robin Foemmel Bie, Mental Health Section Manager, at (916) 491-3759, [robin.foemmelbie@vcgcb.ca.gov](mailto:robin.foemmelbie@vcgcb.ca.gov) or Janice Patton, VCP Manager, at (916) 491-3521, [janice.patton@vcgcb.ca.gov](mailto:janice.patton@vcgcb.ca.gov). You can also use the Information Forum Request form on our website at [www.victimcompensation.ca.gov](http://www.victimcompensation.ca.gov).